

hormone levels, and for many, more exposure to household cleaning reagents.

The Pew Environmental Health Commission just released the results of an 18 month study in which they found that the nation suffers from a troubling shortage of strong leadership in environmental health. The Pew report stressed that an understanding of environmental factors offers the best disease prevention and cost saving opportunities. Among the recommendations of the Pew report is the development of a nationwide tracking network for environment toxins and disease. The Commission is strongly urging the incoming Administration to strengthen our public health infrastructure. During the current fiscal year, Congress has already asked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a nationwide tracking network so we can begin to associate disease with certain environmental toxins, genetic susceptibility and lifestyle. I was proud to lead a group of my colleagues in writing to CDC Director Koplan to urge that this project be undertaken quickly and given priority by the agency.

Over the past decade, evidence has accumulated linking effects of the environment on women and reproductive health, cancer, injury, asthma, autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis, birth defects, Parkinson's Disease, mental retardation and lead poisoning. Lead and other heavy metals found in the environment have been implicated in increased bone loss and osteoporosis in post-menopausal women.

Chronic diseases like those listed above account for 3 out of 4 deaths in the U.S. annually. One hundred million Americans, more than a third of the population, suffer from some form of chronic disease. And chronic conditions are on the rise. Rates of learning disabilities have risen 50 percent in the last decade. Endocrine and metabolic diseases such as diabetes and neurological diseases such as migraine headaches and multiple sclerosis increased 20 percent between 1986 and 1995.

The New York Breast Cancer Study found that women carrying a mutant form of a breast cancer gene are at higher risk of developing breast or ovarian cancer if they were born after 1940, as compared to women with the same mutant genes before 1940. This suggests that

The interaction between environmental factors and one's genes also affect susceptibility to disease. This will be a major area of research now that the Human Genome Project has been completed and new disease-related genes are being found at a rapid pace.

While the scientific community has become increasingly aware of the unique susceptibilities of women to environmental and chemical exposures, our understanding of how these exposures contribute to the diseases of women, and how they interact with genetic factors, is quite negligible. It has been difficult to determine which genes are susceptible to certain environmental toxins because of the lack of large scale studies and centralized data collection. It is time we looked at these possible exposures and their effects from a variety of disciplines—oncology, microbiology, endocrinology and epidemiology.

Current scientific findings indicate that environmental factors affect women's health. For example:

More than 8 million Americans have autoimmune diseases. Most are several times more common in women than in men. More than 90% of patients with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) are women.

Studies have shown that occupational exposure to silica is related to SLE and other diseases. These occupations include mining, pottery and glass making, farming and construction.

Exposure to nitrous oxide (laughing gas) by women dental assistants has been correlated to a severe decrease in fertility according to one study.

Over 9 million working women also have serious back pain. Women are twice as likely to endure job related injuries and illnesses than men.

Dioxin exposure is a key factor in cancers and other reproductive health factors such as endometriosis, fertility and birth defects. Dioxins, which include 219 different chemicals and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), have been found to disrupt human endocrine systems.

More than 70,000 synthetic chemicals are in commercial use today, with an estimated 1000 new chemicals being introduced each year. Most Americans would be shocked to learn that only a handful of these chemicals have ever been adequately tested to determine their effect on humans (full data exists for only about 7% of these chemicals).

The evidence is clear and accumulating daily that the byproducts of our technology are linked to illness and disease and that women are especially susceptible to these environmental health related problems. We need research programs that are specifically targeted towards women's health. The passage of the Women's Health Environmental Research Centers Act is a crucial step toward establishing the valuable and needed basic research on the interactions between women's health and the environment.

This legislation has the strong support of a range of organizations, including the Society for Women's Health Research, the National Women's Health Network, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses, and Physicians for Social Responsibility. I am proud to have as original cosponsors two distinguished colleagues: Rep. SUE KELLY of New York, a long-time activist on women's health issues, and Rep. DAVID PRICE, who represents the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, where the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences is located.

The Women's Health Environmental Research Centers Act is a simple, common-sense step Congress can take toward filling the current gaps in women's health research. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and support its speedy passage.

## YOUNGER AMERICANS ACT

### HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, on December 16, 2000, in accepting his appointment as Secretary of State, Colin Powell urged America to invest in its youth. He said, "We have nothing more valuable as a national asset in anyone's country than the young people." Today, I rise to introduce the Younger Americans Act, a comprehensive, coordinated, community-based approach to youth development. This legislation, which is based on the principles promoted by General Powell's America's Promise group, is a major investment in the youth of this country.

Mr. Speaker, as General Powell has said, now is the time to invest in America's youth. This effort is long overdue. Too many of our programs for youth focus on problems after the fact. The Younger Americans Act is intended to help our young people stay on the road to success and survive the challenges along the way. This legislation is designed to provide additional resources for programs that prepare youth for adulthood. This is "preventive medicine" that will keep good youth from becoming "problem youths."

President-elect George W. Bush has urged this Nation's leaders and policymakers to "leave no child behind." The Younger Americans Act is a bold, new investment in America's young people, providing the critical resources they need to develop skills, contribute to their communities, and build a better future for themselves and the Nation.

This legislation establishes, for the first time in our Nation's history, a comprehensive, coordinated national youth policy. The programs developed under the legislation will follow the five core principles of America's Promise, the organization founded by General Colin Powell to strengthen the "character and competence" of America's youth.

Ongoing relationships with caring adults—parents, mentors, tutors, or coaches.

Safe places with structured activities during non-school hours.

Access to services that promote healthy lifestyles, including those designed to improve physical and mental health.

Opportunities to acquire marketable skills through effective education.

Opportunities to give back through community service and civic participation.

Fulfilling these five promises will help prepare young people to be the parents, workers, voters, and leaders of the future. Under the Younger Americans Act, our national youth policy will not regard young people as problems or only seek to prevent risky behaviors such as delinquency, truancy, and drug abuse—as do most existing Federal programs for youth. Rather, it will support positive youth development efforts, creating positive goals and outcomes for all our country's youth. It will also ensure that young people are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of efforts directed toward youth.

One key component of the bill is that mental health screening and services are made available to young people. Many youth who may

be headed toward school violence or other tragedies can be helped if we identify their early symptoms. Just today, David Satcher, Assistant Secretary for Health and Surgeon General, released a National Action Agenda for Children's Mental Health, in which it was found that the Nation is facing a public crisis in mental health for children and adolescents. According to the report, while 1 in 10 children and adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment, fewer than 1 in 5 of these children received needed treatment. Dr. Satcher urged that "we must educate all persons who are involved in the care of children on how to identify early indicators for potential mental health problems." In fact, a tragedy of contemporary youth is the significant rise we have seen in suicide rates.

According to Dr. Satcher, "the burden of suffering by children with mental health needs and their families has created a health crisis in this country. Growing numbers of children are suffering needlessly because their emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs are not being met by the very institutions and systems that were created to take care of them." This bill provides an important step in ensuring that children with mental health needs are identified early and provided with the services they so desperately need to help them succeed in school and become healthy and contributing members of society.

This bill provides resources for after-school programs, to ensure that youth have access to positive activities that promote their development. I was a member of the Bipartisan Working Group on Youth Violence in the 106th Congress. The findings of this group, and numerous studies, have indicated that charitable and community initiatives should promote access to after-school programs during the peak hours for youth crime of 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. Too often, children return after school to an empty home or to the streets. An estimated 5 to 7 million "latchkey" children go home alone after school. Children who are unsupervised during the after-school hours are more likely to engage in delinquent and other high-risk behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use. After school programs can provide safe, drug-free, supervised and cost-effective havens for children. Quality after-school programs can provide adult supervision of children during after-school hours, and they can provide children with healthy alternatives to and insulation from risk-taking and delinquent behavior. Students should be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular school activities. Studies have shown that a student in one after school activity is almost 50 times less likely to commit crime.

One important aspect of the bill is the collaboration of public and private local organizations. I am pleased that faith based organizations have been included in the bill as collaborators in youth development activities. These organizations have proven effective in addressing the needs of youth and it is important that we have the benefit of their expertise when creating youth development programs.

Finally, let me say that there is no "one size fits all" way to helping our children become productive members of our society. We must allow for an array of programs to address the

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

variety of youth in a variety of communities. This bill provides the flexibility necessary to allow each community to tailor their youth development efforts to their specific needs.

Investing wisely in children and youth by engaging them in positive activities is more effective and much less costly than waiting until young lives have taken a bad turn. The Younger American's Act is a common sense approach to what should be a high national priority. Young people are 23 percent of our population, but 100 percent of our future. This bill will help them achieve their full potential and their rightful place as valued—and valuable—members of their communities.

Let's make sure that "we leave no child behind." General Powell has promised to use his new role as Secretary of State to spread the America's Promise message on the value of youth around the world. Let's be certain that his message is heard and taken to heart in the U.S. Congress.

### MOVE SWIFTLY ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

#### HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 2001*

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, as the 107th Congress convenes today to begin work on the nation's business, one of our first priorities must be reform of our campaign finance laws. In each of the past two Congresses, the House passed comprehensive legislation in this area by substantial bipartisan majorities. In this Congress, we can and must move swiftly to pass campaign finance legislation and assure that comprehensive reforms become the law of the land.

Later this month, I will be joining with many of my colleagues in cosponsoring bipartisan legislation offered by Mr. SHAYS of Connecticut and Mr. MEEHAN of Massachusetts. The Shays-Meehan bill is genuine, meaningful reform to prohibit the use of so-called "soft" money that pollutes our campaign system with unregulated, unlimited and unconscionable sums of money from special interests. Both major parties have become addicted to this flood of money. By adopting the Shays-Meehan bill, we all can just say "No" to soft money.

Another bill that I am cosponsoring is more limited, but no less important. This is the "Stand by Your Ad" bill offered by our colleague DAVID PRICE of North Carolina to require that advertisements put out by campaigns carry a clear and prominent statement identifying which candidate is responsible for the ad. This simple step toward accountability could do wonders for improving the tone of our campaigns. I commend Mr. PRICE for his work on this bill and I am proud to join him.

*January 3, 2001*

### INTRODUCTION OF THE NOTCH BABY ACT OF 2001

#### HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 2001*

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Notch Baby Act of 2001, which would create a new alternative transition computation formula for Social Security benefits for those seniors born between 1917 and 1926. These seniors, who are generally referred to as "Notch Babies," have been receiving lower monthly Social Security benefits than seniors born the years just prior to or after this ten year period.

There are those who dispute the existence of a Notch problem. However, take into consideration the following example presented in a 1994 report by the Commission on Social Security Notch issue. There are two workers who retired at the same age with the same average career earnings. One was born on December 31, 1916 and the other was born on January 2, 1917. Both retired in 1982 at the age of 65. The retiree born 1917 received \$110 a month less in Social Security benefits than did the retiree born just two weeks before in 1916. Also take into consideration that there are currently more than 6 million seniors in our Nation who are faced with this painfully obvious inequity in the Social Security benefit computation formula.

By phasing in an improved benefit formula over five years, the Notch Baby Act of 2001 will restore fairness and equity in the Social Security benefit computation formula for the Notch Babies. For once and for all this legislation would put to rest the Notch issue, and it would put an end to the constant barrage of mailings and fundraising attempts, which target our Nation's seniors in the name of Notch reform. Our seniors deserve fairness and equality in the Social Security system. They deserve an end to the repeated Congressional stalling on this issue. I urge my colleagues in the House to discuss this issue with the seniors in their districts, and to join me in ensuring that the Notch issue is addressed in the 107th Congress.

### RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL COMMUNITIES ASSISTANCE ACT

#### HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 2001*

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, my colleague Representative SHERWOOD BOEHLERT and I are proud to reintroduce the Small Communities Assistance Act.

For years, small towns and villages have labored to satisfy environmental regulations tailored to the needs and resources of major cities. This bipartisan legislation would direct the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide more help for small communities in meeting their environmental obligations.

Larger urban areas can have an entire environmental services department that employs